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**Title:**  
Speech at Leprechaun Club, Hotel Australia

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SPEECH BY THE PREMIER, MR DUNSTAN, AT LEPRECHAUN CLUB.

Hotel Australia. 17.3.74

Mr Dowler, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Today it's my pleasure to celebrate the patron saint of the land where the talking never stops and the pubs never close - the land of Shaw, Yeats, Wilde, Joyce, O'Casey, Swift and Synge.

It's my pleasure to praise that most generous of men - the Irishman, and to present tangible proof of that open-heartedness to the 5AD - Channel 7 Good Friday Appeal.

Mind you, generosity isn't the Irishman's only attribute: It was, I think, a Dublin journalist who said that an Irishman is the only man in the world who will clamber over the bodies of a dozen naked women in order to get to a bottle of stout.

But it is a generous land. The best of the porter, the whiskey, the crystal and the lace have been sent around the world.

The very best of the people were sent to Australia - not, however, always entirely willingly.

And whether first generation or fourth they've remained proud of their heritage, it's part of being Irish.

And after all it was an Irish M.P. - a Colonel Saunderson who indignantly told the House of Commons back in 1890: "I was born Irish and have been so ever since".

But I promised myself before coming here that I wouldn't tell Irish stories - not with so many experts in the room.

I want instead on St. Patrick's Day just to celebrate the magic that is Ireland and the joy that is the Irish character.

I think Anthony Butler summed it up: He was talking of Dublin but it can just as well be applied to the whole island. He said: "It is completely in itself....not a city; it is a lazy man's continent".

More than any other country it seems to leave an indelible impression on those who live in it, leave it or are driven away from it.

Take that incredible gallery of Irish writers from Sheridan to Behan who are the glory of so-called English literature.

It took most of them a lifetime to come to terms with Ireland - and many of them never made it at all.

George Moore for instance solemnly assured one audience that his homeland was "a fatal disease from which it is the plain duty of every Irishman to disassociate himself".

And it's not only the Irish that catch it:

George Bernard Shaw knew what he was talking about when he remarked: "Ireland, Sir, for good or evil is like no other place under heaven; and no man can touch its sod or breathe its air without becoming much better or worse".

It is an infectious land. And whatever the stern realists say about there being no typical Irishman or Irishwoman, it does seem to have something about it that produces more than the usual mixture of delightful rogues, feckless poets, and tenacious fighters for and defenders of freedom.

There's no part of Australian life which the special Irish gifts of laughter and bravery haven't benefited.

It's said that Ireland is the place where the inevitable never happens and the unexpected nearly always does.

But there's nothing surprising in the fact that, the Leprechaun Club having been formed, its members should be rapidly prove themselves industrious and generous for the community's good.

It gives me much pleasure now to present to the Appeal organisers the St. Patrick's Day cheque.

Thank you.

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